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#### GAME LAWS AND COTTONTAIL RABBITS.

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In Many States Hunters Wish Them Protected, While Orchardists and  
Farmers Object to the Damage They Do to Crops and Trees -- It is  
Suggested That Farmers Should Be Allowed to Protect  
Their Crops at all Seasons.  
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Washington, D. C. Cottontail rabbits are valuable for food and afford excellent sport for gunners, but they naturally are regarded by the farmer with disfavor, owing to the damage they do to truck and other crops and to the bark of growing trees and shrubs. There is, therefore, says Farmers' Bulletin 702, "Cottontail Rabbits in Relation to Trees and Farm Crops," considerable rivalry between sportsmen and farmers in some sections to have their opposing views reflected in the game laws. The interests of the two classes do not seriously differ, however, for as the author, D. E. Lantz, Assistant Biologist, points out, when rabbits are closely hunted, losses from their depredations are usually reduced to a minimum. Still there is danger that in years favorable for their increase the animals may inflict injury to trees during severe winters.

Cottontail rabbits ordinarily prefer the succulent foods, such as young shoots, tender garden vegetables, clover, alfalfa, and fallen ripe fruits. During summer droughts or when deep snows cut off their ordinary food supplies, however, the animals attack the bark of growing trees and shrubs, and may do great damage in the orchard.

Rabbits as game are protected, according to reports (1915), by close seasons in the 20 States, in the District of Columbia, and in the 6 Canadian provinces shown in the appended table. Twenty-eight States, Alaska, and the other Canadian provinces do not protect rabbits of any kind. In Kentucky rabbits may be taken by the dog, trap, or snare at any time; in Wisconsin 46 counties, mostly in the southern half of the State, do not protect rabbits; while in California only cottontail or bush rabbits are protected. Fortunately for the farmer, however, in about half the States that have a close season for rabbits the laws permit farmers and fruit growers to destroy the animals to protect crops or trees. Such provision might well be incorporated in game laws of all States. For lack of it farmers have sometimes suffered severe losses, and not a few have been compelled to pay fines for trying to protect their property from rabbits. In States that protect rabbits it is well for the farmer to be acquainted with the game laws and in case of doubt to have a clear understanding with local and State game wardens before undertaking to destroy rabbits.

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## LENGTHS OF OPEN SEASON FOR RABBITS OR HARES.

State or Province.	Beginning of open season.	Beginning of close season.	Length of open season.
			Months.
Maine.....	Oct. 1	Apr. 1	6
New Hampshire.....	" 1	Mar. 1	5
Vermont.....	Sept. 15	" 1	5½
Massachusetts.....	Oct. 12	" 1	4-3/5
Rhode Island.....	Nov. 1	Jan. 1	2
Connecticut.....	Oct. 8	" 1	2½
New York.....	Oct. 1	Feb. 1	4
Long Island.....	Nov. 1	Jan. 1	2
New Jersey.....	Nov. 10	Dec. 16	1-1/5
Pennsylvania.....	Nov. 1	Dec. 1	1
Delaware.....	Nov. 15	Jan. 1	1½
Maryland.....	Nov. 10	Dec. 25	1½
District of Columbia.....	Nov. 1	Feb. 1	3
Virginia.....	" 1	" 1	3
Kentucky.....	Nov. 15	Sept. 15	10
Ohio.....	" 15	Dec. 5	2/3
Indiana.....	Apr. 1	Jan. 10	9-1/3
Illinois.....	Aug. 31	Feb. 1	5-1/30
Michigan.....	Oct. 1	Mar. 2	5-1/30
Wisconsin:			
6 counties.....	Sept. 10	Feb. 1	4-2/3
13 counties.....	Oct. 10	" 1	3-2/3
6 counties.....	Nov. 1	Jan. 1	2
Colorado.....	Oct. 1	Mar. 1	5
California.....	July 31	Feb. 1	6-1/30
British Columbia.....	Sept. 1	Jan. 1	4
Ontario.....	Oct. 1	Dec. 16	2½
Quebec:			
Zone 1.....	Oct. 15	Feb. 1	3½
Zone 2.....	" 15	Mar. 1	4½
Newfoundland.....	Sept. 20	Jan. 1	3-1/3
Prince Edward Island.....	Nov. 1	Feb. 1	3
Nova Scotia.....	Oct. 1	Mar. 1	5

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